

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

July 31, 1967

N. J. DIVISION  
NEWARK LIBRARY

The Committee passed two resolutions:

RESOLVED that this Committee accepts the resolution of the Committee of Concern calling for hearings as soon as possible:

1. a. Into the conduct of the State Police and National Guard during the recent riot in Newark;  
b. Into the conduct of the Newark Police Department prior to, during, and after these riots, which may have been a contributing and causal factor in them.
2. That this Committee will take every step possible to present a planned and objective hearing, giving every side an opportunity to be heard and examined.
3. We have no political motives and will allow none to enter into these hearings. We have neither the desire nor the intent to conduct a "witch hunt," but we are determined that all sides shall be heard.
4. We ask for the assistance of the Communications Committee, the Legal Services Project, and other committees to give us all necessary aid in preparing for and conducting these hearings.

This resolution was passed unanimously by the Legal Affairs Committee.

RESOLVED that wherever any legislative, administrative, or investigative body, federal, state, or local, holds an investigation into either the causes or circumstances of any riot, or into community conditions which may be at the root of the riots, members of this Committee will be allowed to be present and to present any relevant information about the conditions which existed in Newark, prior to and during the riot here.

This resolution was passed unanimously by the Legal Affairs Committee.

In addition to these resolutions, the Committee discussed two other items of particular importance:

1. The Committee considered a suggestion that it provide leadership in organizing groups of citizens to act as "civilian watchdogs" over the Newark Police Department; and
2. The Committee discussed the necessity to create in Newark a Civilian Review Board, but felt that such action should be postponed until the results of the proposed public hearings have been determined.

In connection with the resolution concerning public hearings, the Committee discussed the difficulty of encouraging witnesses to appear without being able to guarantee such witnesses any measure of protection against reprisals. The Committee was unable, at this time, to find a solution to this problem.

The Co-chairman has called for another meeting of the Legal Affairs Committee on Monday, August 7, 1967, at 7 p.m. at the Abyssinian Baptist Church.

BY

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Reverend H. P. Sharper  
Co-chairman